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■ 5 PREDICTIONS ON HOW AI WILL SHAPE HIGHER ED IN 2026

“For the higher education sector, 2026 is likely to be another year of grappling with the power of generative artificial intelligence to reshape research, teaching, learning, and campus operations... Some education experts are prepared for the sector’s growing disenchantment with generative artificial intelligence. Others believe it will improve college systems and processes.” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

Read more [here](#).





AI ON CAMPUS: RETHINKING THE CORE GOALS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

“Instructors are evaluating how artificial intelligence impacts the main goals of education and adjusting their teaching accordingly. This leads to conversations about critical thinking and changing workforce expectations.”
(Source: Government Technology)

Read more [here](#).

PURDUE TO REQUIRE ALL UNDERGRADS DEMONSTRATE ‘AI WORKING COMPETENCY’

“Starting with next fall’s incoming freshmen, Purdue University will instate, as a graduation requirement, that students demonstrate basic skills with using large language models. The new “AI working competency,” includes five categories: Learning with AI, Learning about AI, Research AI, Using AI and Partnering in AI. After being approved by a university trustee board last week, the new requirement is hoped to ensure that all Purdue students understand a technology that is increasingly influential.” (Source: EdScoop)

Read more [here](#).



DLSS
UPDATES

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FLVC HOSTED THE FIRST NATIONAL VOICES IN DIGITAL LEARNING SPEAKER SERIES EVENT ON OCT. 14

Last October, FLVC hosted a virtual event at the latest DLSS Members Council Meeting, “**National Policy Priorities Shaping the Future of Digital Learning**,” the first event from their FLVC National Voices in Digital Learning Speaker Series—a new initiative designed to help our Members Council connect with nationally recognized leaders, researchers, and policymakers shaping the future of online and digital education.

This timely session unpacked key developments from the Department of Education’s current negotiated rulemaking process, which included the RISE Committee (Reimagining and Improving Student Education), the AHEAD Committee (Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell Committee), and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Committee. In addition, participants learned about the Department of Justice’s new digital accessibility requirements effective April 2026, the latest federal budget implications for higher education, and evolving federal and national perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence in digital learning.

Presenter: Dr. Van Davis, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President of Digital Learning, WICHE

Many thanks to our guest speaker for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.



In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:

[Recording](#)
[Presentation Slides](#)

FLVC HOSTED A SPECIAL SESSION WITH THE NC-SARA NATIONAL TEAM ON DEC. 4

Last month, FLVC hosted a webinar, “**A Deep Dive into SARA: A Special Session with the NC-SARA National Team**,” the first event from their FLVC Digital Learning Leadership Series—another new initiative designed to help our Members Council connect with nationally recognized leaders, researchers, and policymakers shaping the future of online and digital education.

This interactive session covered the history and purpose and addressed the nuances of SARA compliance, including professional licensure disclosures, out-of-state placements, and recent policy updates.

This was a unique opportunity to strengthen our institutions’ compliance efforts and get answers to our most pressing questions.

Presenters: Dr. Marianne Boeke, President, NC-SARA and Jeannie Yockey-Fine, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, NC-SARA

Many thanks to our guest speakers for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.



In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:

[Recording](#)
[Presentation Slides](#)

FLVC HOSTED ANOTHER NATIONAL VOICES IN DIGITAL LEARNING SPEAKER SERIES EVENT ON DEC. 12

Last month, FLVC hosted a webinar, “**Shaping the Future, Right Now: The Previous Year in AI and Higher Education Policy and Practice.**” This talk examined the changing approaches to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education over the past year. As college campuses transition from resistance to proactive deployment, AI and GenAI have become a cornerstone in how higher education envisions the future of education. This presentation addressed matters of policy, practice, infrastructure, and compliance in this shifting landscape.

Presenter: Dr. Sid Dobrin, Professor, University of Florida

Many thanks to our guest speaker for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.

In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:

[Recording](#) | [Presentation Slides](#)



INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHT: AI MEETS AVOCADOS: A FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT’S SMART APPROACH TO REDUCING FOOD WASTE

“A doctoral student from Florida State University is using artificial intelligence to help make one of the planet’s most wasted foods easier to preserve.

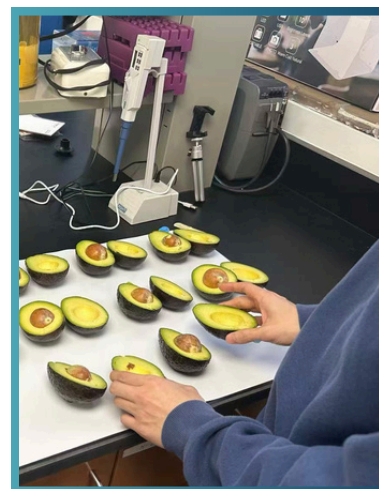
Zhengao Li, currently pursuing his doctorate in measurement and statistics, joined two Oregon State University researchers to develop a smartphone-based AI system designed to accurately predict the firmness and internal quality of avocados.

Their findings were **published** in the journal Current Research in Food Science, and their work was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

For Li, it was a chance to access AI’s powerful capabilities.

“The biggest thing I learned was how to connect model performance with real scientific processes,” Li said of his experience. “From collecting samples, preparing Raman spectra and image data, training the model, to checking how the model explains its results, I learned that every step should reflect how fruits move from being ripe to spoiled.”

Read more [here](#). (Source: FSU News)



FL-IDN LATEST WEBINAR: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING: BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY FROM THE GROUND UP

Last month, FL-IDN hosted a webinar, “**Universal Design for Learning: Building Accessibility from the Ground Up.**” This session explored how to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles from the beginning of course design rather than retrofitting accessibility features after courses are complete. Participants examined the time and resource costs of the retrofitting approach and learn practical workflows that scale from individual documents to complete course components.

Our guest speaker, Samantha Groh (University of Cincinnati), included demonstrations of tools and case study examples that illustrate accessibility implementation in real-world contexts, along with strategies for presenting accessibility as an enhancement that benefits all students.

Many thanks to our guest speaker for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.

In case you missed it, here are a couple resources below:

[Recording](#) | [Presentation Slides](#)



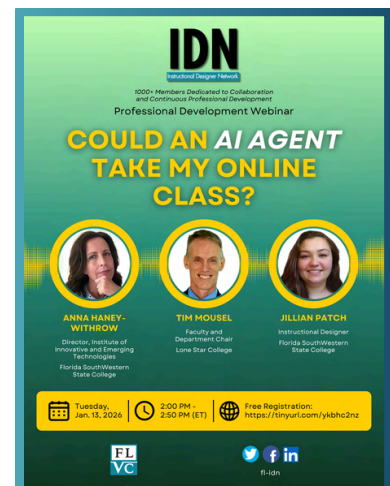
FL-IDN LATEST WEBINAR: COULD AN AI AGENT TAKE MY ONLINE CLASS?

This month, FL-IDN hosted a webinar, “**Could an AI Agent Take My Online Class?**” A working group representing faculty, instructional design, IT, and administration set out to explore the potential of online courses to be disrupted by AI agents working on behalf of students. Rather than relying on theory alone, they engaged in active experimentation. Through working sessions and honest dialogue, they’ve surfaced practical, course-level strategies that may disrupt AI agents while enhancing the learning experience for students.

Anna Haney-Withrow (FSW), Jillian Patch (FSW), and Tim Mousel (LSC) invited others into the conversation, sharing design tactics and lessons learned from a collaborative inquiry into what it takes to keep humans at the center of online education.

Many thanks to our guest speakers for sharing their expertise and experience with our community.

The recording and other resources related to this webinar will be sent to the FL-IDN and MCDLSS listservs as soon as they are made available.





UP NEXT

■ REMINDER: INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHTS ON FLORIDASHINES

This is a reminder that during the last MCDLSS meeting, the Student Services Team introduced an upcoming feature on the FloridaShines website designed to highlight our Florida institutions on the homepage.

To ensure your institution is accurately represented, we kindly ask that you complete the form linked below to provide your institution's details.

The form requests an official institutional image (campus photo) and a brief description—additional instructions are included within the form.

Please submit your information at your earliest convenience, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Complete the form [here](#).

■ REMINDER: MCDLSS ACCESSIBILITY AD HOC WORKING GROUP INTEREST FORM

On behalf of the DLSS Members Council Executive Committee, we are exploring the formation of an Accessibility Ad Hoc Work Group shaped by member interests and needs.

This interest form is designed to gather input on interest in participation, preferred meeting frequency, and workable Friday meeting times, as well as to identify priority accessibility topics.

Your responses will directly inform the focus, structure, and scheduling of the group to ensure it reflects member-identified priorities and supports meaningful collaboration across institutions.

Complete the form [here](#).

Please respond no later than **Friday, January 16, 2026**.

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■ FLVC IS LAUNCHING THEIR FIRST COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATION ON JAN. 23

This month, FLVC will host their first virtual event from their FLVC Collaborative Conversations Series—a new member engagement opportunity to foster cross-institution dialogue and shared problem-solving. Each session will focus on a single priority area and will be informal, participatory, and solution-focused, with ample opportunity for discussion and peer exchange.

This session will focus on **Simple Syllabus implementation**, particularly in light of recent state changes related to Textbook and Course Material Affordability and Transparency. It will also provide an opportunity to compare approaches, surface challenges, and identify practical strategies institutions are using to align policy, technology, and practice.

January 23, 2026 | 2:00 - 3:00 PM (ET) | Register for free [here](#).

Resources related to this virtual event will be sent to the MCDLSS listserv as soon as they are made available.

■ FL-IDN UPCOMING WEBINAR: PROJECT JUGGLING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS: STAYING SANE AND DELIVERING EXCELLENCE

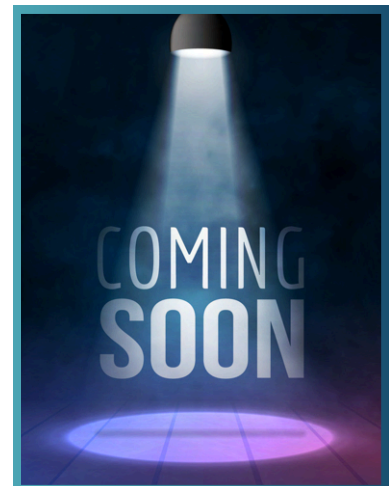
Next month, FL-IDN will host the webinar, "**Project Juggling for Instructional Designers: Staying Sane and Delivering Excellence**." Instructional designers rarely work on one project at a time—most are juggling multiple course builds, initiatives, and collaborations, all while navigating evolving priorities like accessibility and AI integration.

This webinar introduces sustainable, repeatable practices for managing a high volume of instructional design work without sacrificing quality. With insight from both a practicing instructional designer and an ID manager, attendees will gain a dual perspective on workflow challenges and solutions. Topics include prioritization frameworks, batching strategies, project tracking tools, and values-aligned routines to reduce stress and prevent burnout.

Our guest speakers, Carrie Cole and Cairo Jones (Virginia Commonwealth University), will provide templates, tools, and an interactive planning activity to support immediate and ongoing application.

February 10, 2026 | 2:00 - 2:50 PM (ET) | Register for free [here](#).

The recording and other resources related to this webinar will be sent to the FL-IDN and MCDLSS listservs as soon as they are made available.



FLVC TO HOST VIRTUAL MCDLSS MEMBER RESOURCE WEBINAR ON FEB. 12

Next month, FLVC will host a virtual orientation of the FLVC Members Council on Distance Learning and Student Services. Registration for virtual attendees is free, and any member is welcome to participate.

This is a great opportunity for members, new and old, to learn about the benefits of membership, their responsibilities, FLVC services and resources, key distance learning state and federal statutes and regulations, current contracts and agreements, and much more.

February 12, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM (ET) | Register for free [here](#).

The recording and other resources related to this virtual event will be sent to the MCDLSS listserv as soon as they are made available.



FLVC TO HOST MCDLSS SPRING 2026 MEETING VIRTUALLY ON FEB. 25 AND FEB. 26

A virtual meeting of the FLVC Members Council on Distance Learning and Student Services will be held on Wednesday, February 25 from 1 - 5 p.m. and Thursday, February 26 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.

Free registration, resources, and other information can be found below.

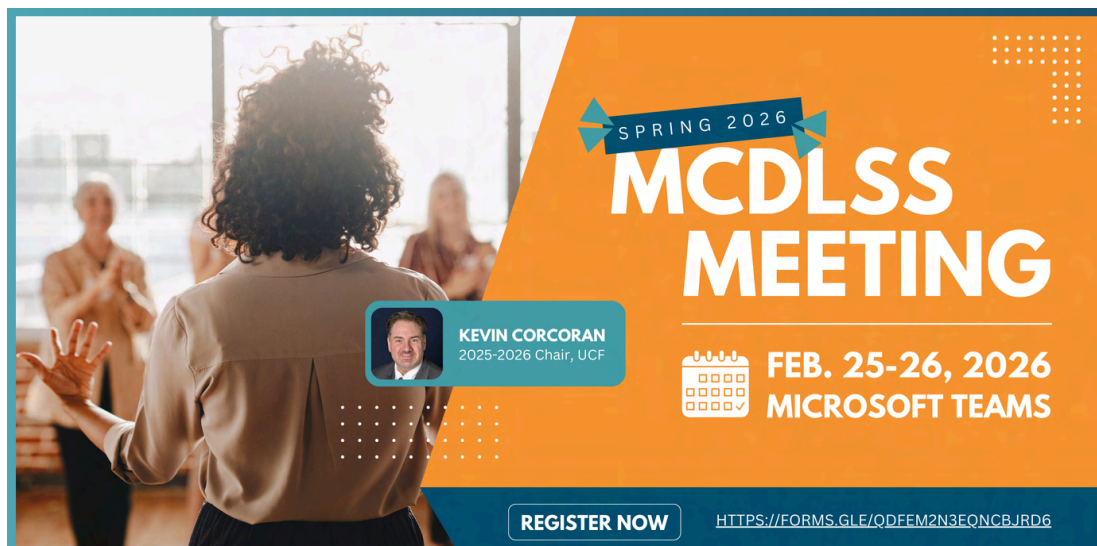
REGISTRATION & DEADLINE:

Please register your attendance below.
Registration closes on Tuesday, February 24, 2026.
<https://forms.gle/qDFem2n3eQnCbJrd6>

RESOURCES

The agenda, presentation slides, Oct. 2025 minutes, and other meeting items will be shared with registered attendees prior to the scheduled event.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact [Brooke Tome](#).



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SAN BOX

■ IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: THE WCET AND SAN POLICY TRACKER

We are pleased to promote the policy tracker developed by WCET and SAN for digital learning policy.

The [WCET and SAN Policy Tracker](#) provides a centralized resource for timely updates on federal statutes, regulations, guidance, judicial actions, and executive orders relevant to the digital learning community.

More policy items and resources will be added at a later time.

■ NEW SAN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- [8-Week/Online SAN & State Authorization Foundations Course](#)
 - **Registration is now open. Training begins January 20, 2026.**
 - This course is designed to enhance the understanding of out-of-state compliance/state authorization rules and regulations. The course features helpful information for those who may be new to the profession, seeking refresher information, or individuals who simply want to enhance their knowledge in the field.
- [In-Person SAN Implementation Workshop 2026](#)
 - **Registration is now open. March 18-19, 2026; Boulder, CO.**
 - This workshop will be a hands-on opportunity to work through practical implementation exercises related to professional licensure, state institutional approvals, communication with key stakeholders, and other compliance areas.

■ FLVC STATE AUTHORIZATION LISTSERV

As a reminder, the Florida Virtual Campus provides an annual group membership to the State Authorization Network (SAN) for all Florida College System (FCS) and State University System (SUS) institutions. Since 2011, SAN—a division of WCET—has been a national leader in providing guidance, professional development, and support on regulatory compliance for out-of-state activities of postsecondary institutions.

You may access the [SAN Member Portal](#) [here](#).

Username: Florida Virtual Campus | **Password:** SANhelps1819

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ARTICLE DIGESTS

■ UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY INITIATIVE TO ADVANCE AI EFFORTS ACROSS THE CAMPUS AND STATE

“The University of Kentucky has launched CATS AI (Commonwealth AI Transdisciplinary Strategy), a campuswide effort aimed at advancing AI across the institution's 17 colleges, libraries, research centers, and institutes; its academic and healthcare enterprises; and throughout the state. CATS AI is an initiative of the Advancing Kentucky Together (AKT) Network, a statewide partnership led by the university to position the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a national leader in AI adoption and innovation.” (Source: Campus Technology)

Read more [here](#).

■ CAN UNIVERSITIES HELP STUDENTS BECOME INFLUENCERS?

“In recent years, surveys have found that 57 percent of Gen Zers said they would like to become an influencer if given the chance, while 12 percent actively aspire to become influencers. But few institutions of higher education have attempted to capitalize on that demand.” (Source: Inside Higher Ed)

Read more [here](#).

■ CAN AI HELP SOLVE THE POWER PROBLEM IT CREATED?

“It's time to manage energy as a strategic asset. While AI is fueling demand at historic levels, it also gives us the tools to use power more intelligently, stabilize the grid, and unlock capacity we already have. If we work together, AI can turn today's energy challenge into tomorrow's competitive advantage.” (Source: Fast Company)

Read more [here](#).

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■ **OPINION: FROM LECTURE HALLS TO VIRTUAL CLASSES, AI IS REWRITING THE RULES**

“Modernizing education with artificial intelligence is less about buying this or that new tool than about new processes, new applications for data analytics, and reorganizing instructional priorities around new norms.” (Source: Government Technology)

Read more [here](#).

■ **THE UNIVERSITY, THE CHATBOT, AND A CALL FOR A NEW MISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

“In the age of artificial intelligence, higher education institutions must move beyond simply transmitting knowledge and instead prioritize holistic human development, integrating mental health, social-emotional learning, and ethical reasoning into academic structures to prepare students for meaningful lives and responsible citizenship.” (Source: Educause)

Read more [here](#).

■ **3 ED TECH SHIFTS THAT WILL DEFINE 2026**

“As colleges and universities operate with tighter budgets and growing uncertainty, leaders are being pushed to reassess their priorities, and digital learning is emerging as a central focus of those conversations. At the same time, the digital learning landscape is entering a new phase defined by rapid advances in artificial intelligence, rising expectations for the student experience, and increasing pressure to demonstrate quality and accountability in online education.” (Source: Campus Technology)

Read more [here](#).

■ **HOW TO INCORPORATE DIGITAL TOOLS WITH EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING PRACTICES**

“Transform Learning, a new instructional resource hub featuring digitally enabled, evidence-based teaching practices (DE-EBTs), has two goals: make proven instructional methods more actionable, and make visible how learner-centered practices can be supported by digital teaching and learning tools.” (Source: Every Learner Everywhere)

Read more [here](#).

■ **COURSERA TO ACQUIRE UDEMY TO CREATE \$2.5B MOOC GIANT**

“Coursera is acquiring fellow MOOC provider Udemy to create an online education and upskilling giant valued at \$2.5 billion, the companies announced Dec. 17. The combined company is poised to generate \$1.5 billion in annual revenue and eliminate some \$115 million in costs, Coursera and Udemy said in a press release. In explaining the deal — expected to close in the second half of 2026 — the companies pointed to their complementary consumer-facing and business-to-business offerings, as well as rising demand for artificial intelligence skills training.” (Source: Higher Ed Dive)

Read more [here](#).

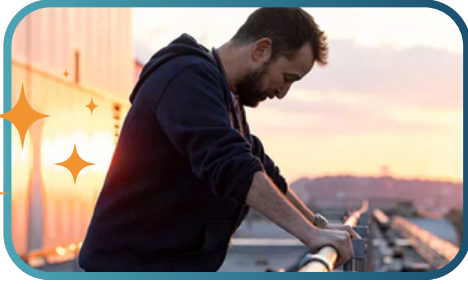
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■ TV MUST-SEE: THE PITT

“A realistic examination of the challenges facing healthcare workers in America as seen through the lens of the frontline heroes working in a modern-day hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Starring Noah Wyle. Second season now streaming on HBO Max.

(Source: [RT](#))



■ YOU GOTTA TRY IT: THE BUBBLE ROOM

“Originally a family residence, The Bubble Room is one of the most unique and entertaining restaurant experiences you will find. Creative lunch and dinner menus with freshly baked breads, decadent cakes, and delicious signature cocktails. Three floors of dining fully decorated with retro “Bubble Lights”, moving trains, photos of musicians, stars, and starlets from the Golden Age of Hollywood, plus over 3000 antiques from the 30’s and 40’s on display!”

(Source: [The Bubble Room](#))



FUN STUFF

■ SPINE-BENDERS: THE MOST ANTICIPATED FICTION BOOKS OF 2026

“With a new year comes a new opportunity to find your next favorite story, and this is the perfect time to read widely. Will 2026 be the year you finally explore romance novels? Or are you looking forward to another year of cozy mysteries? Maybe you’ll find a fantasy book that grips you. No matter what genre you gravitate towards, these are some of the most exciting fiction books heading to shelves this year. See all of our Most Anticipated Books of 2026 [here.](#)” (Source: [B&N](#))

■ YOU GOTTA GO: COLLIER-SEMINOLE STATE PARK

“The 7,271-acre Collier-Seminole State Park lies partly within the great mangrove swamp of South Florida, one of the largest mangrove swamps in the world. A wide variety of wildlife, including several imperiled species, inhabit this unusual blend of temperate and tropical native plant communities. The park is the site of a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, the last existing Bay City Walking Dredge. Built in 1924, it was used to build the Tamiami Trail Highway (U.S. 41) through the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp, linking Tampa and Miami and opening Southwest Florida to travelers.”

(Source: [Florida State Parks](#))

